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Twenty-second report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1537 (2004) of 30 March 2004, by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) for an additional period of six months, until 30 September 2004. In the same resolution, the Council approved my recommendation that a residual UNAMSIL presence remain in Sierra Leone, for an initial period of six months from 1 January 2005, and requested me to proceed with the planning necessary to ensure a seamless transition from the current configuration of UNAMSIL to the residual presence. The Council also requested me to provide quarterly assessments of progress made against the benchmarks for the UNAMSIL drawdown, including the capacity of the Sierra Leone security sector. The present report describes the progress made in the Mission's withdrawal and provides an assessment of the security situation and implementation of the benchmarks.

II. Security situation

2. The overall political and security situation in Sierra Leone has remained stable, allowing UNAMSIL to continue the implementation of the adjustment, drawdown and withdrawal plan. The favourable security environment has also made it possible for UNAMSIL to handover to the Government the primary responsibility for security in the Northern and Southern Provinces. UNAMSIL will continue to provide support to the Sierra Leone police in these areas, including for patrolling and monitoring the overall security situation. In the Eastern Province and the Western Area, which covers mainly Freetown and its outlying parts, the handover to the Government of primary responsibility for security is scheduled to take place in August and September 2004, respectively.

3. UNAMSIL and the Government of Sierra Leone have continued to jointly evaluate the security situation at the National Security Council Coordinating Group's weekly meetings. The Mission has also been working closely with the provincial and district security committees and has conducted frequent joint exercises with the Sierra Leone police and Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF). However, there is a need to increase the level of coordination of the activities of these committees, with a view to enhancing their effectiveness. In this

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connection, the Office of National Security could play an important role in the management of these committees.

4. Despite the relative stability in the country, socio-economic problems remain a catalyst for frustration among the population. The price of basic commodities and imported goods continues to rise in Freetown and throughout the country, and there have been a number of public sector strikes over the late payment of salaries and benefits. With the advent of the rainy season, the economic situation may become even more complicated and have a further impact on the recovery process. The high poverty level combined with widespread unemployment and the marginalization of certain segments of society, in particular young people, could affect stability in the country.

5. The relationship between the personnel of RSLAF and the Sierra Leone police remains a source of concern. Significant progress has been made towards developing cooperation between the security forces at the senior levels and a number of joint exercises have been conducted throughout the country. However, during the reporting period, two incidents occurred in Freetown between Sierra Leone police personnel and representatives of the armed forces. The first incident was over an attempted arrest by the police of a civilian alleged to be in possession of a large consignment of army uniforms. The second was during an Easter Monday parade, when an RSLAF officer was arrested for assaulting a police constable on duty. The Government swiftly launched an investigation into these incidents. It is important to ensure that relations between the two main agencies in the Sierra Leonean security sector are cooperative and mutually supportive.

6. Many observers believe that the Special Court trials, which began in June 2004 and are expected to conclude in 2005, may become a source of instability. It is expected that there may be an increased risk that elements hostile to the Court could use violent means to disrupt its work. The need to ensure the protection of witnesses during and after the trials also poses a significant challenge. Consequently, UNAMSIL, in cooperation with the Special Court security team and the Sierra Leone police, is reviewing security arrangements to ensure that the Mission can respond to any eventuality.

7. Although the situation in Liberia is gradually improving, with the deployment of the United Nations Mission there, the security environment in the border areas needs careful monitoring. Sierra Leone's borders continue to require robust patrolling and monitoring until the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in Liberia is completed. Some concerns also continue to be expressed at the security situation along the border with Guinea, where some members of the Guinean armed forces were reportedly observed engaging in farming and hunting activities inside the territory of Sierra Leone. This has prompted RSLAF to deploy closer to the border with Guinea. In the east, similar concerns have been reported about incidents of harassment of Sierra Leoneans on the border along the Meli River. Furthermore, the complicated political and security situation in Côte d'Ivoire may affect Liberia and thus, in turn, Sierra Leone.

III. Local government elections

8. The local elections, held on 22 May 2004, have re-established an important institution of governance whose neglect had been among the major causes of the conflict in Sierra Leone. Given the complexity of the process, and taking into account that 32 years had passed since local government bodies had been suspended, the successful conduct of the election reflects credit on the Sierra Leone people, as well as the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and the Sierra Leone police. As a result of these elections, 475 posts of councillor were filled in 394 wards nationwide. It was encouraging that 2,271,435 voters were registered in the registration process. During the month of April, NEC accepted the nomination of 1,132 prospective candidates, 20 of whom were later disqualified. On 21 May, following appeals by 12 disqualified Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) candidates, the Commission ruled that three of them could stand, but the process resulted in the postponement of elections in three wards. In three other wards, technical issues prevented the conduct of elections on 22 May. The elections in all six of these wards were eventually held on 5 June.

9. Of the 1,115 candidates whom the Commission approved to contest the elections, 107 were women; 347 were independent candidates, while the remainder belonged either to the two main political parties, SLPP and the All People's Congress (APC), or to three other parties, whose candidates only contested seats in the Western Area. The Revolutionary United Front Party (RUFP) did not take part in the election, reportedly owing to financial constraints.

10. Following the elections NEC received over 70 appeals and petitions. Most of these were rejected following investigation by the Commission. The Commission also ruled that in eight wards the elections should be re-run on 3 July 2004. According to the certified results, SLPP won in 279 wards, controlling 13 councils, mostly in the south and east. APC won in 27 wards, controlling 4 councils in the north and 23 in the Western Area. In addition, 29 independent candidates were elected.

11. UNAMSIL, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other international partners were closely involved in supporting the NEC activities. Electoral campaigning, which started on 22 April and ended on 20 May, was generally low-key and peaceful. However, prior to polling day, there were a few complaints of harassment and intimidation of both independent candidates and candidates of the major parties. Some traditional rulers, as well as some government officials, were also alleged to have interfered in the electoral process and the NEC Chairman strongly denounced such practices. During the preparatory phase, 788 temporary Commission staff were trained and deployed nationwide to carry out civic education and, while the overall turnout on polling day was lower than expected, voting was conducted in a peaceful atmosphere, with no major violent incidents reported. National Election Watch, a coalition of 14 civic and non-governmental organizations, fielded some 1,437 accredited observers on polling day. These organizations characterized the elections as generally free, transparent and exempt of violence.

12. UNAMSIL provided extensive logistical support for the elections. This included land and air transport to most chiefdoms, communications support, provision of assistance to the Commission with the establishment of its main

operations centre, and technical advice. UNAMSIL civilian police organized an extensive programme on election policing for the Sierra Leone police. The Public Information Unit of the Mission extended the Commission's outreach with intensive election-related programming and panel discussions, and during the polling period recruited and trained 20 local journalists. In the meantime, UNDP funded civic education activities, managed the disbursement of Commission funds and arranged financial management and accounting training for its field staff. The United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) and the European Union (EU) provided technical and financial support for the electoral process.

13. With a view to beginning to prepare for national elections in 2007, the NEC Chairman addressed a letter to the United Nations on 21 April requesting further technical assistance, particularly for the professional development and training of the Commission staff. In this connection, a United Nations electoral needs assessment mission was dispatched to Sierra Leone in June.

IV. Implementation of the UNAMSIL drawdown plan

14. In its resolution 1537 (2004) of 30 March 2004, the Security Council welcomed my intention to adjust the timetable for the UNAMSIL drawdown during 2004, in order to ensure a more gradual reduction in its military strength and a seamless transition to the UNAMSIL residual presence in 2005. This adjustment envisaged a reduction in force strength from its current level of 11,500 to approximately 5,000 troops and 260 military observers during the period from June to December 2004 and, subsequently, to 3,250 troops supported by 141 military observers by 28 February 2005. Under the adjusted drawdown timetable the withdrawal of all UNAMSIL troops from Sector Centre has been completed, with the repatriation of the Sector Centre headquarters staff, the remaining Bangladeshi battalion, the Bangladeshi medical unit, elements of the Bangladeshi signals unit and the Nepalese battalion. Prior to the closure of Sector Centre on 28 May 2004, UNAMSIL handed over the responsibility for security in the Sector to the national security agencies. As this is the first time that UNAMSIL has handed over such large areas to Sierra Leone security agencies, the drawdown is being executed with particular caution. Following the reduction in troop strength from 11,500 to 10,500, the Mission's deployment structure was reconfigured from the three-Sector structure (West, Centre and East) to two Commands, namely, Northern and Southern Commands. The headquarters of the Northern Command is in Freetown and that of the Southern Command is in Koidu.

15. The implementation of the next phase of the drawdown, which will commence in September and be completed in December 2004, will involve deploying the United Nations Force in three strategic locations, namely, Freetown, Kenema and Bo. By the end of this phase the troop strength will have been reduced to 5,000. Of these troops, some 1,500 military personnel will be provisionally retained beyond December 2004, to assist logistically with final repatriation and drawdown. These will be the Kenyan guard and administration company, the Southern and Northern Commands, the Ukrainian transportation and maintenance unit, the Bangladeshi signals unit and the Jordanian level III hospital personnel. In order to ease the administrative burden and facilitate a seamless transition into the new Force configuration, the repatriation of the above-mentioned troops will take place between January and February 2005. The 3,250 remaining troops, together with the

141 military observers who will continue to be present in the country after February, will be stationed at 11 sites throughout the country with the task of supporting the national security agencies to ward off any security threat, as well as assisting them with mentoring programmes.

V. Progress on benchmarks

A. Strengthening the capacity of the Sierra Leone police

16. Since my last report, the Sierra Leone police have generally continued to make progress towards assuming responsibility for the maintenance of law and order. With the support of UNAMSIL and the Commonwealth advisers, the pace of recruitment into the police force has been accelerated and the training of new recruits has been enhanced. The mandated task of reaching the pre-war level of 9,500 trained Sierra Leone police recruits is expected to be achieved by July 2005. To date, a total of 1,377 recruits have been trained, bringing the strength of the Sierra Leone police to 7,903. Taking into account the attrition rate, it is expected that by the end of 2004, a strength of 8,200 will have been reached. The construction of additional barracks for the police is expected to be completed by July 2004 and the expanded capacity of the police training school in Hastings will make it possible to increase the number of recruits trained during one course from the current 400 to 600.

17. The UNAMSIL civilian police strength stands at 126. By December 2004, it is expected to be reduced to 80 officers, with a concurrent reduction in team sites from 18 to 9. The new United Nations civilian police structure will consist of 9 headquarters staff, including the Police Commissioner; 6 strategic advisers (for cross-border issues, diamond-mining policing and airport security); 15 specialized unit advisers dealing with intelligence, the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol), community policing, the Family Support Unit, driving school and other issues; and 15 United Nations trainers and 35 mentors. The trainers will be deployed to the Hastings police training school and the three regional training centres in Makeni, Kenema and Bo. The mentors will be co-located with the larger Sierra Leone police units.

18. During the reporting period, UNAMSIL has continued to assist the Sierra Leone police to raise its professional standards. In-service courses have included such subjects as community policing, human rights, police administration, fingerprint techniques, intelligence gathering, hard-copy file management. UNAMSIL also funded renovation of the regional police training centres in Makeni and Bo, which has allowed training courses for senior police officers to commence. UNAMSIL and other members of the United Nations family are also running a series of human rights workshops for local police, which concentrate on issues of human rights and the law, police ethics, the rights of women and children and the handling of suspects. So far, some 2,000 police officers have benefited from these courses. However, it is obvious that much more effort will have to be made to raise the level of professionalism of the Sierra Leone police to internationally accepted standards.

19. UNAMSIL also continues to assist in the deployment of the Sierra Leone police in areas being vacated by the Mission. Such deployment depends, however, on manpower and resource issues that remain unresolved, and in particular, on the

availability of infrastructure, especially police stations and barracks. The construction of additional police stations and barracks funded by the UNAMSIL Trust Fund, UNDP and DFID is ongoing and is expected to be completed by December 2004. In this context, DFID and UNDP are funding the construction of eight barracks in Koidu/Motema, Jendema, Makeni, Kamakwe, Tongo, Daru, Segbwema and Kailaun. There is an acute need, however, for additional assistance to make this programme a success. In this regard, it is imperative that donors make further resources available to meet the logistic and infrastructure needs of the Sierra Leone police, to enable them to assume their security responsibilities effectively when UNAMSIL withdraws.

B. Strengthening the capacity of the armed forces

20. RSLAF has been making progress in its restructuring. The envisaged downsizing of the force from 14,000 to 10,500 personnel by 2007 is on track, although resources for the forthcoming phases of the process are yet to be identified. With the support of the United Kingdom-led International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT), RSLAF has developed a revised concept of operations for 2004 focusing primarily on operational development. The recently established new military academy represents a significant step towards making RSLAF a modern military institution; and the academy's training programmes have been expanded to include courses for company commanders, commanding officers and senior officers. The Government is also making efforts to improve the operational focus of RSLAF.

21. Cooperation between RSLAF and other security agencies has been enhanced through their participation in the National Security Council and the National Security Council Coordination Group. Similarly, at the local level, provincial and district security committees have helped to build better relations between the central security agencies and local institutions. UNAMSIL has trained a number of RSLAF personnel in military policing, vehicle maintenance, information technology and communications, etc. As a confidence-building measure, Radio UNAMSIL has allotted time slots to RSLAF and the Sierra Leone police to disseminate information on a weekly basis.

22. However, the short-term initiative to address the shortage of barracks, which is being undertaken jointly by UNAMSIL, the Government and donors, may not be completed before 2010. This delay undoubtedly will have an impact on the operational effectiveness of RSLAF. UNAMSIL has continued to render technical and material assistance for this important project.

23. The serious infrastructural and logistical challenges facing RSLAF, which have been highlighted in previous reports, still persist. Inadequate funding, the lamentable state of the army vehicle fleet and the shortage of communications equipment continue to hamper the operational effectiveness of the armed forces, particularly in the border areas, where one third of them are deployed. Unless the Government and donors make a concerted effort to address these challenges, the armed forces are unlikely to be able to assume full responsibility in the future.

C. Consolidation of State authority

24. The Government of Sierra Leone, supported by its development partners, continues to make progress in its efforts to consolidate State authority. In this regard, the magistrate court buildings in Kailahun, Pujehun and Moyamba and the High Court building in Kenema were rehabilitated with the support provided by UNDP and DFID. However, the effective administration of justice remains severely constrained by the shortage of magistrates and judges and their consequent inability to cover all district courts. This has led to the frequent adjournment of cases, heavy caseloads pending before the courts and the overcrowding of prisons in most districts. With assistance from UNDP, the Government is currently making efforts to recruit magistrates and other judicial personnel. It has also received support from the Commonwealth through the secondment of three judges to serve in the higher courts. While these steps will address some of the immediate needs, it is imperative that the challenges facing the justice system in Sierra Leone be addressed in a comprehensive manner, including through structural reforms, in order to ensure the effective administration of justice and the promotion of the rule of law, which remain essential requirements for durable peace and sustainable development in the country.

25. In order to facilitate interaction with youth groups and further promote the National Youth Policy throughout the country, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, supported by UNAMSIL, has established regional offices in Bo, Kenema and Makeni. Another significant development in consolidating the peace process in Sierra Leone was the declaration in April 2004 by the National Resettlement Assessment Committee that the Kissi Tongi chiefdom in Kailahun district is safe for the resettlement of refugees. During the same period, UNAMSIL contingents completed 16 out of 18 quick-impact projects totalling $240,000.

D. Reintegration of ex-combatants

26. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme was officially closed on 31 March 2004. In attempting to meet this deadline, the Government of Sierra Leone had to address the problem of a residual caseload of about 2,800 ex-combatants who recently came forward and were deemed eligible to claim their benefits. As a result, they received their final one-time assistance packages in early June. According to the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, a total of 54,000 ex-combatants have received reintegration benefits over the past four years.

27. With regard to the estimated 500 to 2,000 Sierra Leonean ex-combatants who may be present in Liberia, the two Governments, UNAMSIL and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) have agreed in principle that this group will undergo the disarmament and demobilization process in Liberia. They will then be given the option to stay in the country and be included in the reintegration process in Liberia or to return to Sierra Leone. In relation to the 500 to 800 Sierra Leonean ex-combatants who may be present illegally in Côte d'Ivoire, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire foresees that they should be given the option to be repatriated to Sierra Leone or to remain in Côte d'Ivoire as refugees. Although there will be no specific reintegration programmes targeting this group, the Government of Sierra Leone believes that the ex-combatants who opt to return to Sierra Leone should be given an

opportunity to participate in ongoing community transitional projects. Conversely, there are some 450 foreign combatants, including nationals of Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, in internment camps in Sierra Leone. The Liberian combatants will have to be repatriated in time to participate in the ongoing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in Liberia. In the meantime, the European Union is funding a skills training programme that is serving as a transitional measure until the Liberian internees can be incorporated in the Liberian national reintegration programme.

28. UNAMSIL is working with UNMIL in order to ensure that in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in Liberia particular attention is paid to the reintegration of Sierra Leonean children associated with Liberian fighting forces, as well as to Liberian child ex-combatants currently in Sierra Leone. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its child protection partners intend to conduct individual screening of those children who are currently residing in refugee camps, with a view to incorporating them in the Liberia disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme. In the same context, particular attention should be paid to women associated with armed factions, with a particular emphasis on their rehabilitation needs.

E. Restoration of government control over diamond mining

29. During the reporting period, the Government of Sierra Leone has made additional progress in the restoration of its control over diamond mining. Official exports of diamonds from January to May 2004 reached a value of $50 million, compared with $29 million in the same period in 2003. The Government expects overall diamond exports to increase significantly in 2004, with the ongoing Kimberlite mining in Koidu and the anticipated increase in licensed diamond-mining activities throughout the country.

30. Notwithstanding the progress made, illicit mining and smuggling of diamonds persist. While implementing the Kimberley Process certification system, the authorities have accepted the offer of the Kimberley Process secretariat to establish a review mechanism, which would also conduct similar projects in Guinea and Liberia — the other two member States of the Mano River Union. This regional approach and monitoring are expected to enhance efforts to curb cross-border movement of illicit diamonds and enhance cooperation among the countries of the subregion. UNAMSIL has supported the establishment of the diamond crime investigation and intelligence unit of the Sierra Leone police and will continue to assist the Government in strengthening its control of the mining sector.

VI. Human rights, national reconciliation and justice

A. Monitoring and promoting human rights

31. During the reporting period, UNAMSIL remained focused on its human rights monitoring activities, including through visiting police units and prisons and observing court proceedings. The Mission has also intensified its training and capacity-building activities for the security agencies and civil society. In the

meantime, the draft legislation on the proposed national commission for human rights has been submitted to the Parliament for adoption.

B. Protection of children

32. UNAMSIL and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) continue to assist the Government in strengthening the protection framework for children. The Government requested UNAMSIL and UNICEF to undertake a comprehensive review of the juvenile justice system, focusing on legislation and policies, procedures for cooperation among relevant government actors and the operation of juvenile justice institutions. It is anticipated that the review process will result in a comprehensive reform agenda for the juvenile justice sector in Sierra Leone. Furthermore, support is being provided to the National Steering Committee on Child Rights and Child Protection Training (for RSLAF and the Sierra Leone police), including in the development of training materials for the police. UNAMSIL and UNICEF continue to support the National Commission for War Affected Children in the development of its advocacy agenda and in the operationalization of its trauma-healing centres for war-affected children. It is expected that these centres will also help to address the growing problem of street children, who are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. In this regard, the Government is developing regulations and policies to prevent and prohibit the employment of children in mining activities, as part of its Core Mining Policy.

33. The Government is currently preparing its next periodic report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocols thereto. A key challenge is the urgent elaboration and adoption of a comprehensive child rights bill, which would bring national legislation into line with Sierra Leone's international commitments concerning the rights of children. With the support of UNICEF, the Government and key child protection agencies have also developed the main elements of a child poverty alleviation and development framework designed to mainstream issues relating to children in the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) for Sierra Leone. UNAMSIL and UNICEF continue to collaborate with the transitional justice institutions in Sierra Leone in their work relating to children, including with the Special Court on the protection of child witnesses.

C. Gender issues

34. The Human Rights Section has continued to actively promote gender mainstreaming in support of women's rights and the elimination of domestic violence and sexual violence. The Section's work has included the provision of support to the Sierra Leone police Family Support Unit. During the period under review, the courts in Freetown convicted 12 persons for offences involving gender-based violence. In addition, some individuals were prosecuted and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment for indecent assaults on under-age children. These are positive developments compared with the situation in the past when very few such cases were successfully prosecuted by the courts.

D. HIV/AIDS

35. UNAMSIL has continued to disseminate information on the impact of HIV/AIDS to its military and civilian personnel, including through training programmes.

E. Truth and Reconciliation Commission

36. UNHCHR, with the cooperation of UNDP and the Government, has identified local partners to assist with the dissemination of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report, which is scheduled for release in September 2004.

F. Special Court

37. The Special Court for Sierra Leone commenced joint trials of indictees on 3 June 2004, with the trial of members of the former Civil Defence Force, including the former Minister of the Interior, Sam Hinga Norman. The trial of members of the former Revolutionary United Front (RUF) has been scheduled to commence on 5 July, while the beginning of the trial of members of the former Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) depends on the appointment of a second trial chamber and the readiness of the defence team.

38. Currently, the Special Court has 84 security officers — 24 international and 60 national staff. They are tasked mainly with access control and courtroom and staff security. In addition, the Sierra Leone police provides 83 personnel to serve as armed static guards at selected locations. However, the Court continues to rely on UNAMSIL with regard to the security of its main site; two United Nations platoons are located there as a dedicated reaction force. In addition, the Court continues to depend on UNAMSIL air transport support for the movement of its personnel to conduct investigations, visit witnesses and carry out its outreach programme. In addition to the logistical support it provides to the Court on a reimbursable basis, UNAMSIL has extended assistance to the Special Court by broadcasting audio feeds of the courtroom trials across Sierra Leone and live broadcasts of the Prosecutor's statements.

39. It is encouraging that after a difficult period with regard to funding, the Court has secured funds for its work until December 2004. The budget for the remaining period of the Court's operation (until December 2005) is in the process of being finalized in consultation with the United Nations Secretariat.

40. In the meantime, the Court is planning an exit strategy on completion of its mandate. In this regard, the Registrar has started negotiations with several countries on the possibility of entering into bilateral agreements on the enforcement of sentences and the relocation of witnesses. Some Governments have already indicated their willingness to cooperate in their regions. Other legal, administrative and logistical follow-up issues are also under review by the Court.

VII. Humanitarian situation and national economy recovery

41. Humanitarian efforts in Sierra Leone continue to be geared towards meeting the needs of Liberian refugees and the repatriation of Sierra Leoneans. Sierra Leone remains host to some 66,000 Liberian refugees, of whom 54,000 are accommodated in eight camps, with the remainder living in urban centres and along the Liberian border. Facilitated voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees is expected to begin in October 2004, provided that conditions in Liberia are conducive to voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity. A Government of Liberia delegation recently visited all the refugee camps and advised refugees to wait for the organized repatriation programme, as Liberia was not yet ready for a mass return. Consequently, there will be a need to support the refugees and their host communities in 2005 and until the completion of the repatriation operation, which is expected to last until 2006.

42. The repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees, principally from Guinea and Liberia, is continuing. Since the programme resumed in January 2004, some 15,595 Sierra Leoneans have been repatriated and it is estimated that, upon completion of the repatriation programme at the end of June 2004, a further 6,000 Sierra Leoneans will have been repatriated from within the subregion. UNHCR will then start phasing out assistance to Sierra Leoneans in countries of asylum. As at the end of May, over 261,000 Sierra Leonean refugees had returned since the beginning of the repatriation operation in September 2000.

43. Progress continues in the reconstruction of the education and health sectors. Schools have reopened in all parts of the country and programmes to train teachers are fully on track. Primary-school enrolment has increased by 70 per cent since 2002 and complementary rapid education programmes for young people have been expanded. The government programme aimed at increasing the enrolment of girls in secondary schools, in particular in the north and east of the country, is being well received. Health services have improved and most districts now have a functioning referral hospital. However, despite the heavy investments of the European Union, the World Bank and the African Development Bank, the educational sector is still beset by problems, including insufficient schools, staff and teaching materials. Severe capacity constraints, including shortages of personnel and a lack of equipment and medical supplies, continue to impede further progress in the health sector.

44. While the country is recovering and substantive progress has been made, improvement has yet to be felt in many areas, particularly in the most devastated districts and those most affected by displacement. In order to ensure the continued consolidation of peace and the advancement of recovery, support must be given to the reintegration of returning populations and recovery efforts must benefit all areas of the country in an equitable fashion.

45. In order to assist the Government in the most vulnerable areas, the United Nations transition support teams established by the United Nations country team have identified needs and priorities and developed strategies for a smooth transition towards longer-term development. The aim is to ensure the durable reintegration of returning populations and the provision of assistance to highly vulnerable communities during the transition. Currently, these teams are active in Kambia, Kono and Kailahun. Plans are under way to expand their activities to all other

districts by the end of 2004. This will be done in synchronization with the drawdown of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and UNAMSIL civil affairs field offices so as to ensure a seamless handover of key responsibilities. In this regard, the Government, support teams, UNAMSIL and UNDP jointly organized planning skills training workshops for all district recovery committees. The main objective of the workshops was to enhance the analytical skills of the members of these committees and to guide them in preparing the district transition reports, which will feed into the poverty reduction strategy paper and will constitute a handover note to the district councils. Similar training is being planned for newly elected local councillors.

46. Sierra Leone's economic performance continues to improve. In 2003, gross domestic product grew by an estimated 6.5 per cent, marking the fourth year of sustained economic recovery. During the first quarter of 2004, a major kimberlite diamond-mining company began production. Offshore oil exploration is expected to get under way soon. Sierra Leone's recovery is being propelled by the rapid growth of donor-financed imports, large-scale reconstruction activities, major increases in land under cultivation and increased investor confidence, as well as growing remittances, investments and tourism on the part of the Sierra Leone expatriate community and broadly sound fiscal and monetary policies.

47. However, inflation will require attention. In 2003, consumer inflation grew by an average of 6.6 per cent because of domestic borrowing by the Government that exceeded projections, exchange rate depreciation and the increase in international petroleum prices. The March 2003 to March 2004 inflation rate suggests some acceleration (11 per cent in Freetown, 9.5 per cent in Bo, 16.5 per cent in Kenema and 22 per cent in Makeni). To keep inflation down, it will be necessary to further reduce the need for domestic bank financing of government deficits, while increasing the output of the productive sector of the economy.

48. A sustained high rate of growth will require continued policy reforms. In addition to sound macroeconomic policies, key priorities include: the identification of Government strategies for poverty reduction; the strengthening of the investment climate, including better infrastructure, fair and predictable regulation and a good investment code; trade reform; strengthened property rights; and the continued fight against corruption.

49. In addition, important challenges have to be addressed, including the decline in donor support to Sierra Leone as a result of an evident shift of priorities. In the case of the World Food Programme, donor response was down to 40 per cent this year from more than 90 per cent in past years. With the projected decline in donor support, the economy is expected to slow down by 2005 to an annual growth of below 4 per cent from its current level of above 6 per cent.

VIII. The regional dimension

50. On 20 May 2004, the Presidents of Guinea and Sierra Leone and the Chairman of the National Transitional Government of Liberia, held a one-day summit in Conakry to officially reactivate the Mano River Union. The Heads of State expressed their commitment to promoting confidence-building measures and security in the subregion, to strengthening cooperation among their countries and to speeding up their integrated and sustainable economic development. At the

invitation of the three Heads of State, the Presidents of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and Mali also participated in the summit.

IX. Cooperation and coordination with other peacekeeping operations

51. UNAMSIL, UNMIL and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) have continued their efforts to establish mechanisms for cross-border and inter-mission cooperation. The Heads of Mission and Force Commanders of the three operations continue to hold regular meetings to establish the mechanisms for joint planning and information-sharing. My Special Representative for Sierra Leone undertook a visit to Liberia in May 2004 to exchange views with his counterpart and to review the situation in their respective mission areas. In April 2004, the UNAMSIL civilian police commissioner and the Sierra Leone Inspector-General of Police travelled to Liberia together to meet with the Director General of the Liberia National Police and the UNMIL civilian police commissioner and to establish mechanisms for joint planning and information-sharing. It is hoped that these initiatives will help to strengthen the police networks in the subregion.

52. UNAMSIL has established a coordinating working group to develop a concept of inter-mission cooperation, which will, among other things, facilitate cross-border military operations. The working group participated in the forum on subregional cooperation in Dakar organized by the United Nations Office for West Africa on 29 and 30 April 2004. UNAMSIL continues to liaise closely with ONUCI and UNMIL. The Commanders of UNAMSIL Sector East and UNMIL Sector 2 met in March 2004 at the border village of Gendema to exchange views on matters of mutual concern. Arrangements are being concluded to continue such meetings on a monthly basis. Liaison officers have been exchanged between UNAMSIL and UNMIL, and plans are under way to extend this arrangement to ONUCI in the near future. Significant progress has already been made in the sharing of assets, as exemplified by the continued support provided by UNAMSIL to UNMIL and ONUCI.

X. Observations and recommendations

53. During the reporting period, the Government of Sierra Leone has made significant progress in consolidating peace and in promoting national reconciliation and economic recovery. This progress has been facilitated by the gradual and carefully measured approach in implementing the UNAMSIL drawdown plan. Planning to ensure a seamless transition to the UNAMSIL residual presence in 2005 is being finalized. The steady improvement in the security situation in the country helped create an environment enabling UNAMSIL to commence transferring primary responsibility for the national security of the country to the Government. The smooth takeover of the responsibility for security of the Northern and Southern Provinces by the Government marks a milestone in the consolidation of peace and stability in the country. The Government's commitment to staying the course is encouraging.

54. The holding of successful local elections on 22 May 2004 was an important step in the Sierra Leonean peace process. The election of town and district councils

is a vital element in building institutions and enhancing governance in the country. The people of Sierra Leone, the Government and political parties deserve to be congratulated on the successful completion of this important process. I applaud the efforts of the National Electoral Commission, which organized and conducted the elections, and international partners, which provided vital assistance, including, logistical, technical, and financial support. It is important that the newly elected local councils become an instrument for improving the life of their communities. It is also hoped that the people of Sierra Leone will take advantage of the re-establishment of local government administrative structures as a means of addressing the root causes of the conflict.

55. While these promising developments should be welcomed, serious logistical challenges confronting the Sierra Leone police and, especially, RSLAF must be addressed if progress is to be sustained. Of particular importance is the provision of adequate equipment and infrastructure to the armed forces to enhance their capacities and enable them to take over all security responsibilities effectively as UNAMSIL draws down. Additional and substantial donor assistance will be urgently required in this important area. It is important, therefore, for the Council to join the United Nations in appealing to Member States to provide urgently the much-needed assistance for RSLAF.

56. It is unfortunate that the incidents mentioned above in this report have occurred between the armed forces and the Sierra Leone police as the Government takes over from UNAMSIL responsibility for security throughout the country. It is obvious that long-lasting peace and stability in Sierra Leone cannot be guaranteed without collaboration between these two security forces. It is therefore essential that the Government implement expeditiously the action plan it adopted earlier, aimed at addressing major security sector gaps, and that it continue to intensify efforts to find solutions to the issue of harmonizing relations between the Sierra Leone police and RSLAF through the continued sensitization of their personnel and through disciplinary measures. The swift action already taken by the Government in this regard and the determination of the leadership of the two agencies to investigate recent incidents and to adopt a common strategy with a view to preventing their recurrence in the future should be commended.

57. Although the Government of Sierra Leone has made considerable progress in consolidating peace, including the restoration of its authority throughout the country, much more remains to be done to enhance its capacity to deliver public services in the provinces. Both the authorities and donors are encouraged to provide further assistance in this important area. In the meantime, it is encouraging that the human rights situation in the country has improved. The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been completed, while that of the Special Court has progressed satisfactorily, despite the financial constraints that have affected both institutions in the past.

58. The efforts of the Government to curb illegal diamond-mining activities have continued to generate additional revenue from this vital sector. In this connection, the work initiated by the Government and its partners through the High Level Steering Committee on Diamond Sector Reform is most welcome, having in mind the need to ensure that this sector contributes to the accelerated growth of the national economy.

59. The ongoing efforts to improve the overall situation in Liberia continue to have a positive impact on the situation in the whole of the Mano River region. The recent summit of the Mano River Union in Conakry, in May 2004, is an encouraging development, which may create a positive momentum in the subregion. Timely assistance by donors will be vital to strengthen the Mano River Union secretariat and to advance the implementation of initiatives agreed upon.

60. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to troop- and police-contributing countries, as well as to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and donor countries, for their unwavering support towards consolidating the peace in Sierra Leone. I am also grateful to my Special Representative, Daudi Ngelautwa Mwakawago, all UNAMSIL military and civilian personnel and other United Nations agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations, for their important contribution to the steady recovery of the peace consolidation process in Sierra Leone.

Annex

A. United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone: contributions as at 16 June 2004

Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Civilian police*	*Sector headquarters staff*	*Total*
Bangladesh	15	17	1 409	3	64	1 508
Bolivia	6					6
Canada	5			9		9
China	6					6
Croatia	10					10
Czech Republic	5					5
Denmark	2					2
Egypt	10					10
Gambia	15			4		19
Germany			16			16
Ghana	7	9	776	8		800
Guinea	12					12
India				6		6
Indonesia	10					10
Jordan	10	4	118	4		136
Kenya	12	9	1 006	8		1 035
Kyrgyzstan	2					2
Malawi				4		4
Malaysia	10			4		14
Mali	5					5
Mauritius				2		2
Namibia				2		2
Nepal	10	4	599	4		617
New Zealand	2					2
Nigeria	9	14	1 551	6	57	1 637
Norway				3		3
Pakistan	15	19	3 788	2	42	3 866
Russian Federation	13	4	110	3		130
Senegal				7		7
Slovakia	2					2
Sri Lanka				6		6
Sweden	3			4		7
Thailand	5					5
Turkey				7		7
Ukraine	5	4	622			631

Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Civilian police*	*Sector headquarters staff*	*Total*
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	15	7		11		33
United Republic of Tanzania	12					12
United States of America				1		1
Uruguay	11					11
Zambia	9	5	821	10		845
Zimbabwe				4		4
Total	**200**	**96**	**10 816**	**122**	**163**	**11 450**

Annex

B. United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone: contributions as at 22 June 2004

Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Civilian police*	*Sector headquarters staff*	*Total*
Bangladesh	15	17	1 409	3	64	1 508
Bolivia	6					6
Canada	5			9		9
China	6					6
Croatia	10					10
Czech Republic	5					5
Denmark	2					2
Egypt	10					10
Gambia	15			4		19
Germany			16			16
Ghana	7	9	776	8		800
Guinea	12					12
India				6		6
Indonesia	10					10
Jordan	10	4	118	4		136
Kenya	12	9	1 006	8		1 035
Kyrgyzstan	2					2
Malawi				4		4
Malaysia	10			4		14
Mali	5					5
Mauritius				2		2
Namibia				2		2
Nepal	10	4		4		18
New Zealand	2					2
Nigeria	9	14	1 551	6	57	1 637
Norway				3		3
Pakistan	15	19	3 788	2	42	3 866
Russian Federation	13	4	110	3		130
Senegal				7		7
Slovakia	2					2
Sri Lanka				6		6
Sweden	3			4		7
Thailand	5					5
Turkey				7		7
Ukraine	5	4	622			631

Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Civilian police*	*Sector headquarters staff*	*Total*
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	15	7		10		32
United Republic of Tanzania	12					12
United States of America				1		1
Uruguay	11					11
Zambia	9	5	821	10		845
Zimbabwe				4		4
Total	**200**	**96**	**10 217**	**121**	**163**	**10 850**

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Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section